

# ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Since a plurality of image data are stored in a single file, high-speed access to image data and easy management of image data are allowed, and information  
5 that pertains to each image data can be acquired from a source outside the image file. As an arrangement for this purpose, an image data area (202) continuously stores a plurality of compressed image data. An index area (204) stores reference information to a source  
10 outside the file, which pertains to each of the plurality of image data stored in the image data area (202), in the order the plurality of image data are stored. A feature amount data area (203) stores feature amount data obtained from the images stored in the image  
15 data area (202). Furthermore, an image information area (201) stores header information including information indicating the start position of each area.